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COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
STEVE CROSSBY

August 4, 2005

Mr. John A. Rollison, III
Special Assistant to the Commissioner
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 E. Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Subject: HOT Lanes

Dear Mr. Rollison:

The Stafford County Board of Supervisors is pleased and extremely supportive of considering the PPTA HOT lanes proposals on I-95 in our region. They are gratified of the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for taking on the duty of evaluating these new solutions to our difficult congestion challenge on the I-95 corridor.

At its August 2nd meeting, the Board directed that I transmit their comments on the two proposals to you. These comments are attached.

Thank you for your assistance on this matter.

Sincerely,

Signature on File @ VDOT

Steve Crosby
County Administrator

RSC:wam

cc: Board of Supervisors
Fulton deLamorton
Bill Shelly

Stafford County Board of Supervisors
Comments and Concerns on HOT Lane Proposals
August 2, 2005

Stafford County is excited and very supportive of seriously considering the PPTA HOT lanes proposals on I-95 in our region. We are appreciative of the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) taking on the task of evaluating these innovative solutions to our difficult congestion challenge on the I-95 corridor. Both Clark Construction/Shirley Contracting and Fluor/Transurban offer interesting proposals with very significant differences. Based upon the present proposals, the Fluor proposal better fits the requirements and concerns of Stafford County. Stafford County requests that the PPTA Advisory Panel consider the following issues prior to discussing their recommendation:

1. *Final Terminus of the Project.* Stafford County would like to see the HOT lanes extend completely through our region and terminate at Interchange 126 in Massaponax. This is key to the betterment of our county. Our citizens will obtain the greatest benefit by being afforded the same travel choices as our northern neighbors in Prince William County. Although southbound Connector-Distributor (C-D) lanes that extend from Route 17 to Route 3, crossing the Rappahannock River, might offer considerable relief to the traffic flow, we feel that C-D lanes could be added to the outside boundaries of the current I-95 right-of-way in the future should the need arise. It is preferable to Stafford County to have the HOT lanes in place all the way to Massaponax by the time the project is constructed.
2. *HOT lanes project needs to exit at Quantico.* We believe it is essential to provide access to the Quantico Marine Corp Base. Clark does not currently propose to allow northbound traffic to exit until Interchange 156, well beyond Quantico. Fluor has presented several versions of the number of exits/entries and we are unsure whether exits near Quantico are in the current proposal or whether it is just an option.
3. *Phasing of the Project.* Stafford County would encourage the first phase of either proposal to include extending the current HOV lanes southward to at least Garrisonville Road (Route 610). We feel that this suggested phasing would best serve the greatest number of people the fastest. There are already two HOV lanes on I-95, serving the northern part of Virginia. By extending the southern terminus of the HOV lanes in the initial phase of construction, the people in our County would be afforded the opportunity to move immediately into the HOV lanes upon entering I-95. Currently, vehicles attempting to enter the HOV lanes at Dumfries are stacking into the fast lane of I-95 waiting to enter. The demand for the current HOV lanes is being created further south in our region and this demand should be addressed and met in the initial phases of the project instead of significantly later.

4. *Exits for Stafford County.* From an economic point of view, the HOT lanes must allow northbound exits within the FAMPO region and Stafford County in order to have the greatest economic opportunity and benefit for all regions served by the HOT lanes. The HOT lanes should not just be an express to Prince William County and points further north. People entering at the southern termini of the HOT lanes should have the opportunity to begin to exit within 5 miles of entering. Providing additional exit points will assure the most equal opportunity for use of the HOT lanes. According to the traffic volume count data collected for the HOV/CD Access Study performed by BMI-SG in 2002, over 2000 people exit onto Route 17 and Route 3 in just one hour (7:30-8:30am) each weekday. This data is over 3 years old now, and underestimates the current traffic volume. This data does not include the thousands of people who might wish to exit at Interchange 140, 143, 148, or the new Interchange 136.
5. *Smooth connectivity to the new Interchange 136.* Stafford County wishes to have the HOT lanes flow smoothly with the new Interchange 136 currently being constructed. Exits and entrances to this new Interchange should be a part of either HOT lanes proposal. We want to see total connectivity to the Centreport Parkway project. We are concerned at the likelihood of additional safety issues caused by the increased weaving with people entering from Centreport Parkway onto southbound I-95 and then immediately trying to merge with people exiting the HOT lanes. The distance from the termini of the HOT lanes in Clark's proposal to the new Interchange needs to be re-examined with flow of traffic and safety in mind.
6. *Transit funds from both proposals need to reach our region.* Both proposals are hoping to increase transit use in our region through offering a quicker trip for transit providers on the extended HOV/HOT lanes. Moneys to support this transit growth must be channeled into our region to assist in this growth. The Clark proposal shows \$30 million dollars being given directly to VRE and \$30 million being used for bus/vanpool operators at the start of the project. This plan ensures that the money will be used in our region. Fluor proposes to turn \$250 million over to the CTB and allow them to distribute this money to "transit" as they see fit. We want to be assured that the moneys will be used to benefit our region to the \$60 million extent at least.
7. *Both Proposals need to incorporate ramp improvements – ESPECIALLY to Route 17.* Both proposals do not adequately provide for improved Interchanges along the I-95 corridor. Either proposer suggests no ramp improvements. They are proposing to increase capacity along the I-95 corridor by at least one lane and in many places by as many as three lanes, but they are not providing any improvements to the entrance and exit ramps currently servicing the area. It is widely accepted that when road capacity is increased, demand for the newly provided supply also seems to increase to fill the void. If this turns out to be the case, the I-95

ramps may more frequently reach over-capacity, spilling onto the arterial streets feeding into I-95. Nowhere is this more likely to occur than on Route 17. It is imperative that the ramps entering onto I-95 southbound from Route 17 be expanded to two lanes and the exit ramp for Route 17 northbound (leaving the current C-D lanes of I-95 northbound) also needs to be expanded. The HOT lane projects should not force the local jurisdictions to spend their transportation moneys on new road needs generated by the HOT lanes.

8. *Both proposals are providing inadequate commuter lot spaces.* We would like to see sufficient commuter parking provided by the proposals at the various connection points. Fluor is currently suggesting adding approximately 3000 commuter spaces and Clark is proposing approximately 2000. Clark's numbers do not adequately meet the expected demand listed in the FAMPO commuter lot study. Fluor's proposal meets the minimum expected demand that was projected without taking into consideration the building of the HOT lanes in the FAMPO region. Neither proposal would provide adequate commuter lot parking to meet the increase in the projected demand that would occur. One of the main consequences of HOT lanes is the increase in the overall demand for transit. Other localities have experienced more than a doubling of carpools and vanpools as a result of HOT lanes within the first two years. The proposers must provide adequate commuter lot spaces to meet the increased demand their project will produce. The local jurisdictions should not have to scramble to try to meet this increased need.
9. *Handling incidents on the HOT lanes in an emergency.* Clark is proposing that there would be no exit points northbound on the HOT lanes from approximately mile 134 (the start of the HOT lanes) until Interchange 156. That is approximately 22 miles where travelers on the HOT lanes would be unable to exit easily in the case of a serious crash (which normally ties up the roadway for a period of several hours). Clark's proposal needs to be more specific about how they would have incidents cleared in 5-15 minutes. Fluor's proposal does include more frequent exits, but the addressing of incident management is again not detailed. We are concerned about incident management.
10. *Design exceptions of the shoulders cause a critical safety impact.* Both proposals wish to be granted design exceptions from Interchange 156 all the way up to the 14th Street Bridge. This would provide only a 2-foot shoulder on one side of the HOT lanes and an 11-foot shoulder on the other side. This will endanger all vehicles that must stop in the shoulder for enforcement or an emergency. Our law enforcement officers may be at particular risk. This narrowing of the shoulders could also prevent life-saving emergency vehicles from arriving at the scene of an incident in a timely manner.

11. *Fluor's termini and traffic flow.* We are concerned with how traffic will flow into the mainline of I-95 at the HOT lanes termination point proposed by Fluor. We are concerned with how this merge may affect Interchange 126. Fluor is proposing the ultimate end termini to be located south of Interchange 126 on I-95 at US 1/ByPass 17 South in Massaponax. This Interchange is already at or beyond capacity, frequently backing-up onto the I-95 mainline. We are also concerned that this location for the termination of the HOT lanes may not tie in well with another developer's plans at Interchange 126. One smooth flowing design would be ideal.

Thank you for considering our thoughts and concerns. We wish you well as you work towards your recommendation.